Learned the Game of Politics at Mark Hanna's Knee

Now Ruth Hanna McCormick Is Using Her Knowledge for the Benefit of Republican Women

By Hannah Mitchell

A SLIM little girl with long, dark braids sat on a footstool gazing into the fire. Chin on hand, apparently she was dreaming.

But one glimpse into her snapping black eyes which are raised for a moment and the impression given by her quiet body is contradicted. Illusive and superficial pictures in the dancing flames were not holding her attention. She was distinctly alive and interested in more vital things than visions in the glowing coals.

Looming above her in the fire glow, two men were talking. One was large and vital, showing plainly his Irish ancestry. He had the same twinkling black eyes that sparkled in the raised face of the little girl, and in his speech there was the warmth and impulsiveness characteristic of his ancestry. His face reflected a shrewdness and foresight that one usually does not associate with the enthusiasm reflected by his voice.

An Opposite Type

The other man was gentler and more quiet of manner. His low, well advised sentences acted as a spur or a brake, as the case might be, to the other's impulsive exclamations. In sharp contrast to the other man, he was of the Scotch type, carefully weighing every phase of a question before he made a decision and "standing firm" after he had made it. As he talked, his rather delicate hand gently stroked the shining hair of the little girl at his knee.

"Little pitchers" sometimes gather knowledge that is of great value. And the little girl drinking in the words of the two big men was learning political wisdom which she would later turn to the advantage of the women of an entire nation. For history was being made in front of that open fire. The affairs of a nation were the things the two men discussed, intricate political problems and sagacious methods of handling men and swaying events.

Little did Mark Hanna and William McKinley, as they talked on, unmindful of the little girl on the footstool, realize that they were filling a receptive mind with political science that would be used for the benefit of the party to which they belonged years after they were dead. For Ruth Hanna, now Ruth Hanna McCormick, wife of Senator Medill McCormick, of Illinois, literally learned politics at her father's knee, learned it from one of the greatest masters of the greatest American game. As she herself told me:

"My father and William McKinley discussed politics continuously. Many of their informal conferences were held at each other's home. And I usually was there—just listening."

Was a Frail Child

Ruth Hanna was a frail child and, like Theodore Roosevelt, had to build for herself a body that was a fit home for her active mind. The extent of her success in accomplishing her ambition to have a strong body is shown by her skill in sports as she grew up. She is an accomplished horsewoman and plays a good game of tennis.

The compensation so often meted to persons who are shut out from the normal school life and energetic games of other children has been hers. She studied at home the things she liked and learned them thoroughly.

And her companionship with William McKinley and her father proved to be the greatest training school for politics that any one could have attended.

What marvelous tales she could tell, if she would, of "inside politics" in the days when Mark Hanna was the undisputed leader of his party! "Just listening," as she describes it, she absorbed, after the manner of children, political axioms of inestimable value and a practical knowledge of the great American game.

Aside from their close political association, Mark Hanna and William McKinley were intimate personal friends. Their families were bound by a closer tie than many that are linked by blood relationship. In those days Mark Hanna's home was in Cleveland, Ohio. Mr. McKinley was elected Governor and went to Columbus to live.

Her Political Training

Last year when the Republican National Committee decided that it needed the work and advice of the women of the party, Chairman Will Hays appointed as head of the National Executive Committee of Republican Women Mrs. Medill McCormick. The little girl who had watched the fire while the master organizer of the time talked politics was ready to profit by his teaching.

It is safe to say without reservation that he could not have chosen a woman of more significant background for the work that was to be done. Any question of her political qualifications might well have been answered with the words of that Portia who was the wife of Brutus:

"I grant I am a woman; but withal,
A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife:
I grant I am a woman; but withal,
A woman well reputed, Cato's daughter.
Think you I am no stronger than my sex,
Being so fathered and so husbanded?"

The background of her childhood, spent in the confidence of her father and of William McKinley, was supplemented and developed through her companionship with her husband, Medill McCormick. She was married in 1903. The accounts of the wedding, which took place in Cleveland, mention the names of many Republicans famous in the annals of the party. President Roosevelt and his daughter, Alice, made the trip from Washington by special train to be present at the ceremony. President Roosevelt led the wedding procession with Mrs. Hanna. Alice Roosevelt Longworth has been one of Mrs. McCormick's most intimate friends for years, and both these women, brought up in the atmosphere of politics, continue to play important parts in national affairs, social and political.

Became a Reporter

Medill McCormick was, at the time of his marriage, publisher of "The Chicago Tribune," and later its editor. Ruth Hanna McCormick at once entered into the newspaper life with him. The Tribune is a morning newspaper, and, as the initiated know, the busy hours for such a newspaper are late at night.

"I used to spend many evenings a week with my husband at the office," said Mrs. McCormick in discussing her newspaper experience. "I couldn't just sit around and watch; that isn't my way. So I took an active part in the newspaper world."

Newspaper women who were employed in Chicago while Mrs. McCormick was working say she is a "good scout." She had the ability to make herself one with any group of persons with whom she came in contact.

For a year, while they were working with the newspaper, Mr. and Mrs. McCormick gave up their luxurious home and lived with Mary McDowell at the University of Chicago Settlement post outside the stockyards gate, not a pleasant place to live, as any one who has been within smelling distance of the stockyards knows. It was during this time that Mrs. McCormick became acquainted with the really poor working girl. She made friends with many of them and studied their needs. It is an incident of this phase of Mrs. McCormick's life that Mrs. Raymond Robins tells. It seems that Mrs. McCormick met one of her acquaintances, a little, foreign-born factory girl, on the street one day and stopped to gossip with her. A man of the girl's nationality who happened past and chanced to recognize Mrs. McCormick and, with the natural suspicion of the ignorant foreigner, feared her motives, called to the girl:

"Hey, come away from that lady; she's rich!"

"She's not rich," was the girl's indignant rejoinder. "She's one of us. She lives here!"

Her Conversion to Suffrage

As a result of her studies among the poorly paid women in the factories and shops in this country Mrs. McCormick became interested in suffrage for women. She was an active worker in the Woman's City Club of Chicago, which she started through the efforts of Mr. McCormick during the period when he was editor of "The Chicago Tribune." The club tried to get legislation passed bettering the conditions of women. The Legislature was polite but unresponsive.

"The men in politics were courteous," said Mrs. McCormick, "and seemed to agree with the reforms we wished inaugurated, but when it came to getting a bill passed there was always something else that shoved our bills aside, something that involved a group of *voters*.

"I saw then, and the other members of the club saw, that nothing could be done to improve conditions for women unless the legislation was backed by voters.

"It was then that I became an active suffragist. The vote would have to be won before the women could get the legislation for which they asked."

In 1911 Mrs. McCormick went abroad with her husband and lived for a time in France and Great Britain. They studied the economics and politics of other countries, specializing in methods of political reforms.

Joined the Bull Moose

Returning to America in 1911, they were just in time to join the Bull Moose movement and follow Theodore Roosevelt into the Progressive party. Mrs. McCormick smiles when she recalls the exciting days of that strenuous campaign.

"Many of the Old Guard who had known my father came to reproach me, more in sorrow than in anger, for leaving the Republican party.

"'What would your father think if he knew what you are doing?' they would ask.

"'My father would have been one of the first to have broken away,' I told them. 'He was always progressive, and he would have been in the vanguard of the Progressive party.'

"And the men who knew him knew that I was right. He was always working for progress in life and in politics. 'Stand patter,' the expression which was used so much at the time of the split in the Republican party, was one which my father originated. But as he used it, it had a different meaning from that it came to have later. When he was beginning his political career he used to say that he wanted men who would 'stand pat,' men upon whom he could depend, men who would not change with every unfavorable wind or every new orator.

The Full Dinner Pail

"Another popular expression which my father coined was the 'full dinner pail.' He was always interested in the laboring man, and was friendly to organized labor when he was an employer of a large number of men. In fact, he was one of the first employers to recognize labor unions. He encouraged his men to organize, believing they would accomplish more for themselves and do better work at the same time."

Mrs. McCormick pointed out that many of the women who have become leaders of their sex, both in the Democratic and the Republican parties, got their training and their start in the movement which resulted in the formation of the Progressive party. Mrs. George Bass, head of the Women's Bureau of the Democratic National Committee, was one of the workers in the Progressive party in Chicago. Throughout the campaign of 1912 Mrs. Bass and Mrs. McCormick worked side by side in the Progressive headquarters.

A little sidelight upon the relations of women in politics is the fact that Mrs. Bass and Mrs. McCormick are good friends and have remained so in spite of their leadership in opposing camps. While I was in Washington last year when women experienced in practical politics were really beginning to get into the National fight I visited the Democratic women's headquarters and the Republican women's headquarters several times each week.

Are Personal Friends

Both leaders were cordial in their attitude toward each other. They were enemies politically, yes, and each felt that she could draw more women's votes to her party than the other, but this political enmity did not extend into their private intercourse. It was usual for Mrs. McCormick to speak of "Elizabeth Bass" and Mrs. Bass to refer to her rival as "Ruth McCormick."

Going back to the days of the Progressive party, it was then that Medill McCormick began his political career. As a progressive he went up to the Illinois State Senate. Later he ran for Congress and served one term in the House of Representatives. Last fall he defeated James Hamilton Lewis and took his place as the junior United States Senator from Illinois.

Mrs. McCormick worked daily last year at the headquarters of the National Republican Women's Executive Committee, the position to which she was appointed by Chairman Will H. Hays of the Republican National Committee. She conferred informally with Senators representing every viewpoint in the Republican party. Most of these men were openly opposed to woman suffrage. Others had views on politics not in accord with those of Mrs. McCormick. But they valued the counsel of Ruth Hanna McCormick, many of them remembering and having respect for one who had sat at the feet of Mark Hanna.

When she took up the task of enlisting women in the Republican party, Mrs. McCormick saw ahead of her, not far distant, the days of universal suffrage. Even before the United States Senate passed the suffrage amendment she said:

"Suffrage Issue Dead"

"Woman suffrage as an issue is dead."

The pros and cons had been completely argued out. The men of the country had been convinced that the women should vote. The days of the suffrage worker were over. The question had become one of political expediency, and it was up to the parties to recognize and play with it as such, either trying to get the credit to be derived from passing it themselves or trying to get the others from profiting through its passage.

And the long drag in getting suffrage through the last few states has proved that she was right. It is no longer a question of whether women can, would or should vote. It is a question of politics now.

When it came to getting out the woman vote Mrs. McCormick proved herself adept in handling those to whom the franchise was new and in understanding and accommodating herself to their idiosyncrasies. She had been an active worker in the National American Woman Suffrage Association and Congressional chairman for several years. Her part in the suffrage "lobby" which got a suffrage bill through the Illinois Legislature was training for her work at the national capital. The records of the National American Woman Suffrage Association gave a comprehensive field for a study of the woman voter-to-be of the nation.

The plan which Mrs. McCormick worked out for the Republican party when she took the chairmanship of the Women's Executive Committee extended to every county and township in every state in the Union. According to that plan every central committee chairman recommended a woman for a state woman's committee to act with the men's committee.

A Complete Organization

Mrs. McCormick passed on the names of these state chairmen. The women heading state committees in turn appointed the heads of the women's county committees. These chairmen appointed the women to lead township and ward committees. The network was planned down to the last woman on the last block in the smallest village of the nation. Like all plans, this one is, of course, an attempt to reach an ideal, but its scope makes it one which will bring big returns. Mrs. McCormick said of her plan:

"It is not in any way original. If it has any virtue, that virtue is that it follows the familiar line of political organization. It intends that women, as Republicans and citizens, shall work, not independently, but in association with men and under the direction of the leaders of the party.

"We seek to draw into the active service of the party those women who have earned and justified their leadership in the long accustomed services of women. Women who have won their way know, and are known to, women throughout their states and throughout the country, just as our party leaders are known.

"We should not have undertaken this work," continued Mrs. McCormick, speaking for the committee and for herself, "if we had not believed the Republican party was a party of action, not of phrases."

Won Men's Respect

In May last year the Republican Women's National Executive Committee called a national conference of party committee men and women in Washington. Many of the men who came, not exactly to scoff, but certainly more or less in doubt about women's venture into the national game, remained, if not to pray, then at least to listen and learn.

That convention marked the end of the "pink tea" in politics.

"The women have put their teeth into the problems of the party," said Chairman Will Hays of that conference.

Last summer Mrs. McCormick resigned her chairmanship because of ill health. She has not been able to take an active part in the work of the committee since that time, but she has followed the developments in both parties closely.

When I talked with her at her home in Washington recently she showed me that little had happened with which she was not conversant. She is going to the Republican convention in Chicago. And she is watching the pre-convention game of politics with a practiced eye.

Like 1896 Situation

"You know, conditions are somewhat similar to those in 1896," she said, discussing the coming convention. "The delegations were scattered in that year as in this, and no figure stood out as the obvious candidate. It was then that my father pushed Mr. McKinley's candidacy and to a winning conclusion."

I asked her who she thought might be elected this year. And to this question I got a reply spoken like a true politician:

"It's hard to tell. Many of the candidates show strength. I shouldn't be surprised if the proverbial 'dark horse' were to be the candidate."

And there was such a twinkle in her eye that I knew the "dark horse" was not "dark" in her mind.

PRESIDENT WILLIAM McKINLEY, to whom the daughter of his friend Mark Hanna was like a daughter

SENATOR MARK HANNA, who, had he lived, would have been a Progressive Republican, his daughter says

MRS. RUTH HANNA McCORMICK and her two children. As a girl Mrs. McCormick had the marvelous privilege of spending long hours listening to Mark Hanna and President McKinley talk politics

SENATOR MEDILL McCORMICK, of Illinois, with whom Ruth Hanna McCormick is closely associated in the game of politics

An Aladdin's Lamp of Science

SCIENCE has produced an Aladdin's lamp.

The genii that it conjures up are as giants compared to the pygmies who answered the call of the bewildered Aladdin.

The modern lamp of science has no restrictions. Its possibilities are only just beginning to assert themselves. Even now scientists are awakening to the fact that this wonder of the twentieth century may be actually translating to us the thoughts that are passing through the minds of those inhabitants who supervise the canals on Mars, or mayhap from those on the planet Mercury. The ultimate achievements of this lamp conjured up by the genius of science surpass the strangest of dreams or the wildest imagination. Apparently there is no limit to its possibilities.

A Few of Its Marvels

While no man can define its absolute powers, the things which this lamp already does are almost unbelievable. It steers an airplane or a ship safely to its destination through the densest fog. It bears upon the wings of incomparable speed the thoughts of man to the uttermost reaches of the earth. It reproduces his voice with the greatest ease and precision in every language and jargon under the sun.

It transforms a whisper, so delicate that no human ear can hear, into a roar louder than the tumbling cataracts of Niagara. It throws a man's voice clear across the troubled surface of the Atlantic, above the thunderous storms, spurning all the impediments that the jealous elements can array against it.

It acts as the brains of a ship at sea without a living soul aboard. Soon it will be able to shatter the mightiest battleship afloat. It has given to man mentally that added power which modern transportation has given to him physically.

"What is this miracle lamp of science that has produced such wonders?" you will ask.

The Energy of the Atoms

It is known under the general term of "Vacuum Tube." Variations of it are variously named, such as Audion, Pliotron, Dynatron, Pliodynatron, etc. It performs its wonders through the mysterious and unknown activity of those minute particles that surround the atom of matter—in other words, through the activity of the myriad infinitesimal bodies that move around the smallest thing the mind of man has been able to conceive.

So far as we can tell, man in his blundering way may have unlocked the storehouse of energy that Sir Oliver Lodge assures us lies within the atom—energy sufficient in one small atom to lift the largest steamship in the world to the top of the highest mountain. It is known that in this wonderful lamp electrons are torn away from their parent atom while the lamp is at work. So! Who knows?

The lamp itself is, like most modern wonders, the gradual development of the genius of many men. Each year sees it improved upon. In appearance there is nothing mysterious about it, although in some of its latest forms it has assumed an imposing character.

At the first glance it looks very similar to the ordinary electric bulb that illuminates a million homes throughout the country, but there is this difference—inside the vacuum tube, around the filament, there is a coil of heavy wire, known technically as the "grid." Around the grid there is in turn a metal cylinder, technically known as the "plate." It is the addition of these two elements that transforms the lamp into the modern wonder of science.

It was early observed that the ordinary electric bulb threw off particles while the filament was glowing. In fact, it is this very action that finally ends the life of the bulb. If you take a burned out bulb and examine it carefully you will notice that the glass is much blacker than that of a new bulb of the same type. This has been caused by the bombardment of particles from the lighted filament.

The First Step

This fact set scientists to work upon the theories that were evolved, and after several stages the vacuum tube was born in its first form, Dr. Lee de Forest's "Audion." The incentive to the development of this vacuum tube was the need of a more sensitive detector to be used for wireless telegraphy.

The vacuum tube has far outstripped the original idea. Its uses are not restricted to wireless telegraphy and telephony. In fact, it has made transcontinental telephony possible through the powerful amplifying characteristics it possesses. By means of its selective properties it is now being used to transmit fifteen or more telephone conversations on a single wire simultaneously without interference.

It is the instrument that has made "wireless direction finders" possible—the wonderful apparatus that steers airplanes and ships through fog. It will shortly enable any one in this country to converse with a friend in Europe over the ordinary telephone in their own homes. Within the next few years a passenger on the Twentieth Century Limited, racing between New York and Chicago, will be able to talk with a passenger on the Leviathan in mid-ocean through its instrumentality.

Makes the Voice Clearer

It is the selfsame modern Aladdin's lamp that is recording those strange signals that Signor Marconi believes to come from another world. These are the signals received simultaneously by the large wireless stations in all parts of the world, of such strength that they could not possibly come from any wireless transmitter on earth. Moreover, they are of a much longer "wave length" than any signals ever produced through the agency of man.

The lamp itself not only amplifies the currents it receives, besides detecting them, but in the case of the human voice it asserts a modulating effect never before dreamed of. This effect is so remarkable that wireless telephone conversations are much clearer than any ever reproduced on a land line telephone.

Its properties as a control factor have been utilized with great success in steering wireless controlled torpedoes and torpedo boats that have no crew aboard. This is particularly true in the case of the boat developed by John Hays Hammond jr. Through these agencies it will eventually sound the death knell of the battleship.

These are the things that the magic lamp of science already does. Its ultimate possibilities, already casting their shadows before them, are still shrouded behind the veil of the future.